

RB and ACCC not settled

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) case against Reckitt Benckiser (RB) (**PD** 01 Apr) has not been settled at mediation.

A case management conference has been set for 08 May.

Win a Nourish Naturals pack

This week, **Pharmacy Daily** and **Nice Pak Products** are giving away a Nourish Naturals prize pack.

The Nourish Naturals™ range contains naturally derived ingredients and provides skin with deep nourishment. Clinically tested, Nourish Naturals products are free from sulphates, parabens, artificial colours and fragrances. According to the company, the high quality ingredients deliver real results for dry, sensitive, rough, itchy and flaking skin, or skin prone to eczema, psoriasis and dermatitis.

To win, be the first from **QLD** to send the correct answer to the following question to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Fill in the blank: Nourish Dry Skin Lotion is ideal as an everyday moisturiser and hydrates skin for up to ____ hours. Suitable for the whole family to use.

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Rebecca Segrott from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

Tender for PBAC review

THE Department of Health has released a request for tender for the review of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) submission guidelines.

Minister for Health Sussan Ley confirmed the review, saying this was the PBAC being proactive to make sure the guidelines remained appropriate.

The review would develop a methods guidance to replace the second and third parts of the current guidelines, and revise overall procedures for submission, the Department said.

The tender calls for an organisation to provide a concise and up to date guidance in terms of methods used in health technology evaluation of drug subsidy.

This would include looking at work on new Guidelines already carried out by PBAC, which touched on new methods for indirect comparisons in clinical evaluation and the process to identify bias in clinical evaluation.

The section dealing with process matters would be prepared in

parallel with the Department, providing general information about the procedures involved.

There would be a public consultation process via online submissions, the document said.

Medicines Australia said it was "critical" to continuously review the guidelines as new technologies were developed and drug research became more complex.

It welcomed the review and would encourage regular reporting of how the guidelines were being put into practice, to establish whether improving them led to better access to medicines, ceo Tim James said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Examine PBS change poss consequences

FOLLOWING the announcement of changes to remove OTC analgesics from the PBS, as well as allowing pharmacies to discount the prescription co-payment (**PD** 27 Apr), the PSA has said while it is important to ensure a sustainable PBS, possible consequences needed to be examined.

PSA national president Grant Kardachi said that any measure to save money needed to be carefully considered so that health care was not compromised.

"Further, the 'OTC' medications on the PBS count towards the safety net which may be significant for low-income families with multiple people with chronic illnesses."

PBAC recommends melanoma therapy

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has recommended an Authority Required listing of pembrolizumab (Keytruda from MSD) for unresectable stage III or metastatic (stage IV) malignant melanoma under a shared cost arrangement, matching the cost to patient for ipilimumab.

This follows the US Food and Drug Administration's accelerated approval (**PD** 09 Sep 14) and Therapeutic Goods Administration approval (**PD** 23 Apr) for the same indications.

CLICK HERE for more.

GRIP Oz launches

THE Global Respiratory Infection Partnership (GRIP) Australia arm has launched, looking to raise awareness of antibiotic stewardship.

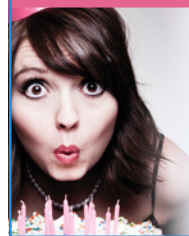
The group was convened by Reckitt Benckiser (RB) and supported by an unrestricted educational grant, RB said.

The group said inappropriate antibiotic prescriptions for upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) was a leading cause of antibiotic overuse in Australian primary care.

It looked to further understanding of treatment options for URTIs among healthcare professionals, with a local website to be launched in the coming weeks, RB said.

Members include chair and pharmacist John Bell and Concord Hospital head of infectious diseases Associate Professor Thomas Gottlieb.

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CPD conferences speakers announced

SPEAKERS across the latest pharmacy developments, including business management matters, will be presenting at conferences in Borneo and Canyons/Park City.

An Asthma and COPD update will also be included along with employment issues and professional conduct presented by Australian lawyers.

CLICK HERE for more.

Guild Update

Guild's training course takes the guesswork out of recruitment

THE Guild Academy has developed a new resource to help pharmacies make smarter recruitment decisions.

Making Smart Recruitment Decisions is a suite of three online courses aimed at addressing how to find and keep good employees.

The first course, titled Activating the Recruitment Process, is now available on myCPD and discusses:

- Ways to identify the direct and indirect costs of recruitment,
- Development of key recruitment documents,
- Avenues to source job candidates and ways to advertise to attract the right candidates,
- The Guild's Quality Care Pharmacy Program as a resource throughout the recruitment process.

The course is free to all Guild members and their employee pharmacists. The course is available to non-members for \$250, payable upon enrolment.

Visit the [Guild Academy website](#) for more information on new and upcoming courses and to register or access [myCPD](#).

PBAC on biosimilar "a" flagging

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) has said it will consider the marking as equivalent of biosimilar medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule with their reference medicines on a case by case basis with reference to evidence presented to list a biosimilar.

The PBAC said it also considered PBS listing of biosimilar medicines at a special meeting in April, with outcomes yet to be published.

The Generic Medicines Industry Association (GMiA) welcomed the announcement, and to list biosimilar insulin.

Applying an "a" flag would let pharmacists substitute a biosimilar for the reference biological medicine, as with generics, it said.

GMiA ceo Belinda Wood said it was important that a discussion about biosimilars was happening.

PBS savings generated from biosimilars could provide better patient access to medications but could only be realised if more

biosimilars were listed, prescribed and dispensed, she said.

GMiA chair Mark Crotty has said there should be a clear pathway to boost uptake of biosimilars (**PD** 13 Mar).

Medicines Australia ceo Tim James said biosimilars could not be determined to be identical to a reference biologic and were not considered bioequivalent.

"As a result, the TGA's existing position is that automatic substitution by a pharmacist is not appropriate for biosimilars.

"It is critical that the treating physician must be responsible for any decision to substitute between an original biologic and a biosimilar."

Medicines Australia's position was that the decision of the regulator should be respected when it came to substitution.

EMA nods 11 meds

THE European Medicines Agency (EMA) has recommended 11 new medicines including one orphan for approval at the April meeting of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use.

Medicines recommended include melanoma treatment Opdivo (nivolumab), Hetlioz (tasimelteon), Lixiana (edoxaban) and seven generic medicines.

CLICK HERE for details.

RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's RGH E-Bulletin looks at the role of alemtuzumab (Lemtrada) which was approved for funding this month by the PBS for first and second line treatment of adults with active relapsing/remitting multiple sclerosis.

CLICK HERE to access.

DISPENSARY CORNER

MANGO for it.

If you're looking for an extension to your pharmacy, you could try throwing fruit at the Prime Minister, following the example of a woman who threw a mango at Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro and was given an apartment.

Apparently, the woman wrote her number and a message asking the president to call her on the mango and heaved it through a bus window, where it hit the leader on the ear, *BBC News* reported.

He later approved her request for an apartment, saying she had a housing problem and the deal was part of the Great Housing Mission of Venezuela, the publication reported.

NB: **PD** does not advocate throwing fruit at political leaders.

I WOULDN'T touch that, Prof.

We're willing to bet most pharmacy students reading this won't have to worry about unexploded World War II era bombs in their Universities.

Not so for students at Middlesex County College in New Jersey, where a 500 pound bomb was found on the College campus, *Associated Press* reported.

The old school armament was taken to a local military base to be exploded, having been discovered during excavation for a new building, the publication reported.

I'M on holiday, dammit!

If you've ever had friends and family question you minutely about their medication, you'll know how four Swedish police officers felt when they broke up a fight on a New York subway train.

The four were off to see Les Miserables but intervened between two brawlers, the publication reported.

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